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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/016,566	10/30/2001	Naoki Tagami	112857-300	6359

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EXAMINER

DETWILER, BRIAN J

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2173

DATE MAILED: 08/31/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/016,566

Applicant(s)

TAGAMI ET AL.

Examiner

Brian J Detwiler

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 30 October 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) ____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

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DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1, 2, and 7-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S.

Patent No. 6,697,840 (Godefroid et al).

Referring to claims 1 and 7-9, Godefroid discloses in column 5: lines 49-62 a method for interaction within a collaborative environment or virtual space wherein “[u]sers may initiate a collaborative communication session, invite others to join an existing session, request to participate in an existing session, accept or decline others’ requests to join a session, or leave a session.” Godefroid further explains in this section that customized admission control policies may require a session initiator’s consent before a user can join a particular collaborative communication session. Accordingly, the claimed notifying means and control means are fully disclosed by Godefroid.

Referring to claim 2, Godefroid’s notifying means must inherently comprise at least one of a visual and an audio notification to a first user. Without such the first user would not be able to respond to requests from a second user to participate in a collaborative communication session.

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Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 3, 4, 6, 10, 11, and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,697,840 (Godefroid et al) and U.S. Patent No. 6,750,881 (Appelman).

Referring to claims 3, 4, 10, and 11, Godefroid fails to disclose storing lists of users designated by a first user as being denied or admitted to a particular user space. Appelman, however, discloses in column 5: lines 23-49 two types of user-designated lists for restricting communication between a first user and a second user. Said communication can comprise “Buddy Chat Invitations” or other requests to enter a virtual user space. The first type of list allows the second user to contact the first user only if the second user’s name appears on a list of permitted users. The second type, vice-versa, allows the second user to contact the first user only if the second user’s name does not appear on a list of non-permitted users. The two lists are mutually exclusive and advantageously provide a degree of privacy to the first user.

Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to store lists of permitted and denied users as taught by Appelman, and to permit or deny users admission a user space occupied by a first user of Godefroid invention according to the stored lists. One would have been motivated to do this in order to increase privacy for users of Godefroid’s invention as suggested by Appelman.

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Referring to claims 6 and 13, Godefroid fails to disclose storing a list of predetermined user-designated spatial locations and placing the list in the virtual space in response to instructions from the user. Appelman, however, discloses in column 6: lines 44-51 a method of sharing a user's favorite places with other users of the system. The method comprises the steps of selecting from a list of favorite places and sending invitations for each favorite place to the desired users. The user is thus placing a list of designated spatial locations into the virtual space. Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to share favorite places as taught by Appelman in combination with the teachings of Godefroid so that users with similar interests can share information that they may find to be useful or interesting as suggested by Appelman.

Claims 5 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,697,840 (Godefroid et al) and U.S. Patent No. 6,212,548 (DeSimone et al).

Referring to claims 5 and 12, Godefroid fails to disclose requiring certain entry information by the second user to allow the second user to gain access to a user space occupied by the first user. DeSimone, however, discloses in column 15: lines 1-12 a system and method in which access to a user space is restricted according to entry information provided by a second user. DeSimone explains in this section that passwords or other keywords may be required before a request for entry to a user space will be honored. The second user, furthermore, could only be aware of said entry information if a first user already occupying the user space distributed the information via some sort of prescreening process as disclosed in column 14: lines 62-67. Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the

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invention was made to require certain entry information distributed by the first user to the second user to allow the second user to gain access to a user space occupied by the first user as taught by DeSimone in combination with the teachings of Godefroid. It would have been advantageous to do this because it increases the privacy of the user space as suggested by DeSimone in column 14: lines 51-54.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record on form PTO-892 and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Applicant is required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111(c) to consider these references fully when responding to this action. The documents cited therein teach alternative methods for communicating in virtual user spaces.


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Brian J Detwiler whose telephone number is 703-305-3986. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Thu 8-5:30 and alternating Fridays 8-4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John W Cabeca can be reached on 703-308-3116. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

bjd



RAYMOND J. BAYERL
PRIMARY EXAMINER
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